



THE NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION.

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Washington, D. C.

The Water Power Bill and the National Parks.

The announcement from the White House last Saturday that the President had signed the Water Power Bill confronts us with still another great peril, for, the National Parks were found to be included in its provisions.

This constructive Act creates a Commission consisting of the Secretaries of War, Interior and Agriculture, with power to grant licenses for the building of dams, power houses, transmission lines and other structures "necessary or convenient" on public lands and reservations. It was not until the very day of adjournment that we discovered the inclusion of the National Parks, and telegraphed the warning far and wide. The President, it will be remembered, gave the bill a pocket veto, but afterward signed it under an old precedent.

By this most unhappy inclusion, the meaning and results of which, we are persuaded, Congress could not have realized, the fate of the National Parks, so far as the destructive application of power is concerned, has been abandoned by Congress for the first time in the Parks' history of half a century, and turned over to three men.

So far as the present administration is concerned the Parks are probably safe, but the first duty of Congress at the next session should be to pass a law excepting the National Parks and Monuments from the provisions of this otherwise beneficent Act. The insistent duty of every member of this Association is to bring his personal influence to bear upon his Senators and Representative to have such an amendment enacted.

The whole situation as a whole is exceedingly grave.

The bill to authorize the use of the Falls River Basin in the Yellowstone National Park for irrigation purposes was stopped at the end of the session, but it was not defeated. It will appear again at the next session. It must be defeated.

A bill granting authority to dam Yellowstone Lake in the interest of Montana ranchers is scheduled for the next session. The movement behind it is well backed by political influence and money. It must be defeated.

And the Power Act must be amended so as to exclude National Parks.

In other words, the essential quality distinguishing National Parks from National Forests, which is their condition of untouched Nature, their status as museums of the original American wilderness, stands in great danger of destruction. A single precedent may easily be followed by the utmost of disaster, for many other National Parks besides Yellowstone have already been marked down by those seeking special privileges through political influence.

The National Parks Association has already begun preparations for the struggle of the coming winter. It calls its members to the defense.

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